

# *Within the Emperor's Garden: The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion*

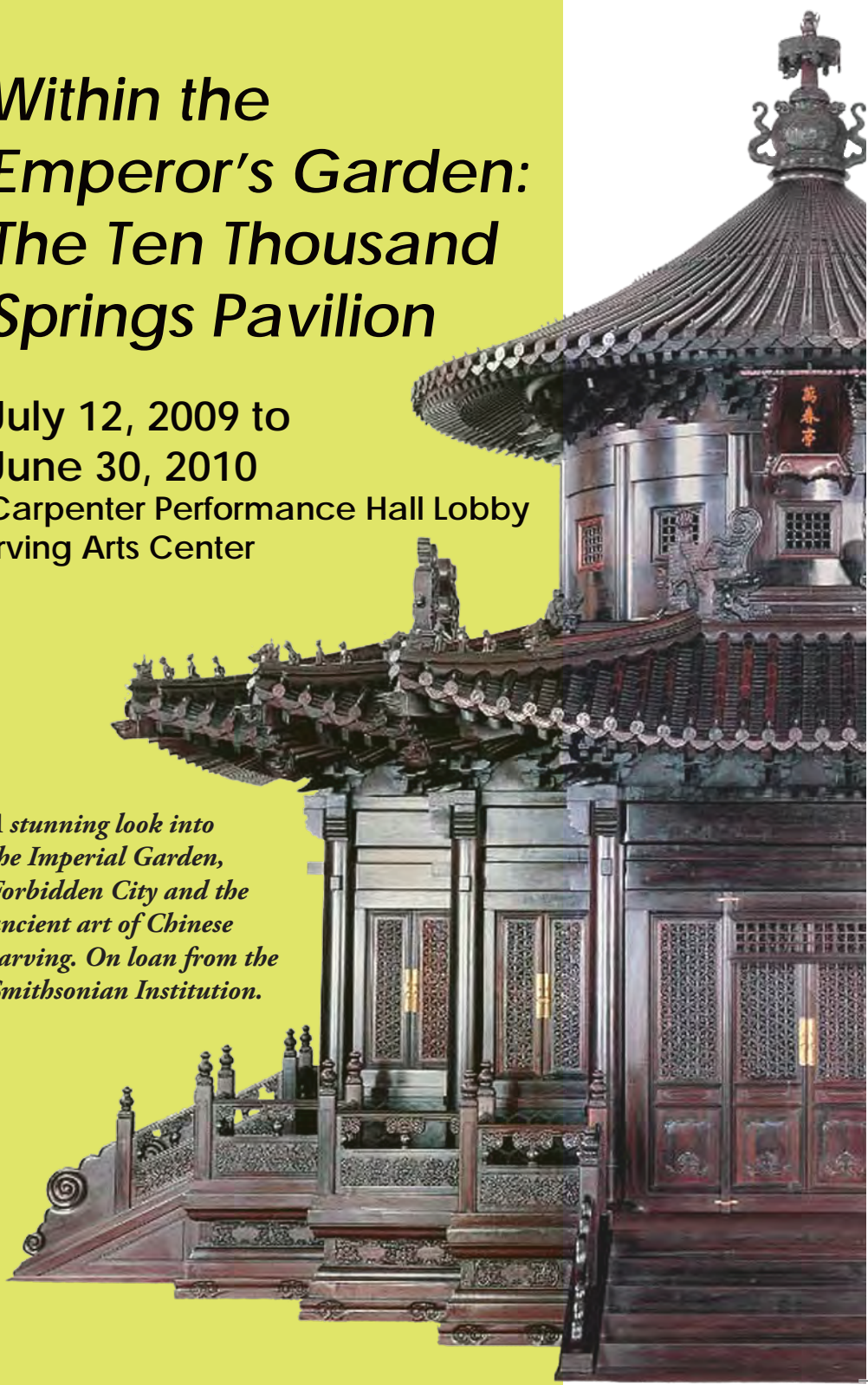
July 12, 2009 to

June 30, 2010

Carpenter Performance Hall Lobby

Irving Arts Center

*A stunning look into  
the Imperial Garden,  
Forbidden City and the  
ancient art of Chinese  
carving. On loan from the  
Smithsonian Institution.*



# Unveil the secrets of the Imperial Garden, Forbidden City and the art of Chinese carving!



*The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion model*



*Chinese women carvers*



*Carving tools*



*Pavilion in Imperial Garden*



*Animal figurines along roof*

## Explore the Exhibition!

*Within the Emperor's Garden: The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion* explores the Imperial Garden, Forbidden City and the tradition of Chinese carving through photographs and text panels, in English and Chinese. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a model of the Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion.

***Forbidden Fact:*** *This is the first time text panels in a Smithsonian exhibition have been available in English and Chinese.*

## Marvel at the Art of Chinese Carving!

The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion (*Wan Chun Ting*) is a dramatic one-to-five model

of the classic Chinese pavilion found within the Imperial Garden in the Forbidden City in Beijing. Hand crafted using red sandalwood—a cherished material in Imperial China—the model stands nine feet tall and is a stunning example of traditional Chinese carving. Artisans from the China Red Sandalwood Museum constructed the model in 2006-2007 as part of a resurgence of traditional art forms. It was commissioned by the museum director, Dr. Chan Laiwa and later donated to the Smithsonian Institution.

***Forbidden Fact:*** *The men and women who constructed the model used traditional methods to fashion and construct the piece—no nails were used. The structure was pieced together like a 3-D jigsaw puzzle.*

## Discover the History!

The Forbidden City served as home to 24 Emperors for nearly five centuries. Built from 1406–1420, it was the political center of the Chinese government. The Imperial Garden is one of four main gardens in the City and was created as a hideaway for the Emperor and his family, allowing for peaceful study of nature and fellowship within the spiritual world. The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion was constructed during the Ming Dynasty and is one of about 20 buildings that adorn the Imperial Garden.

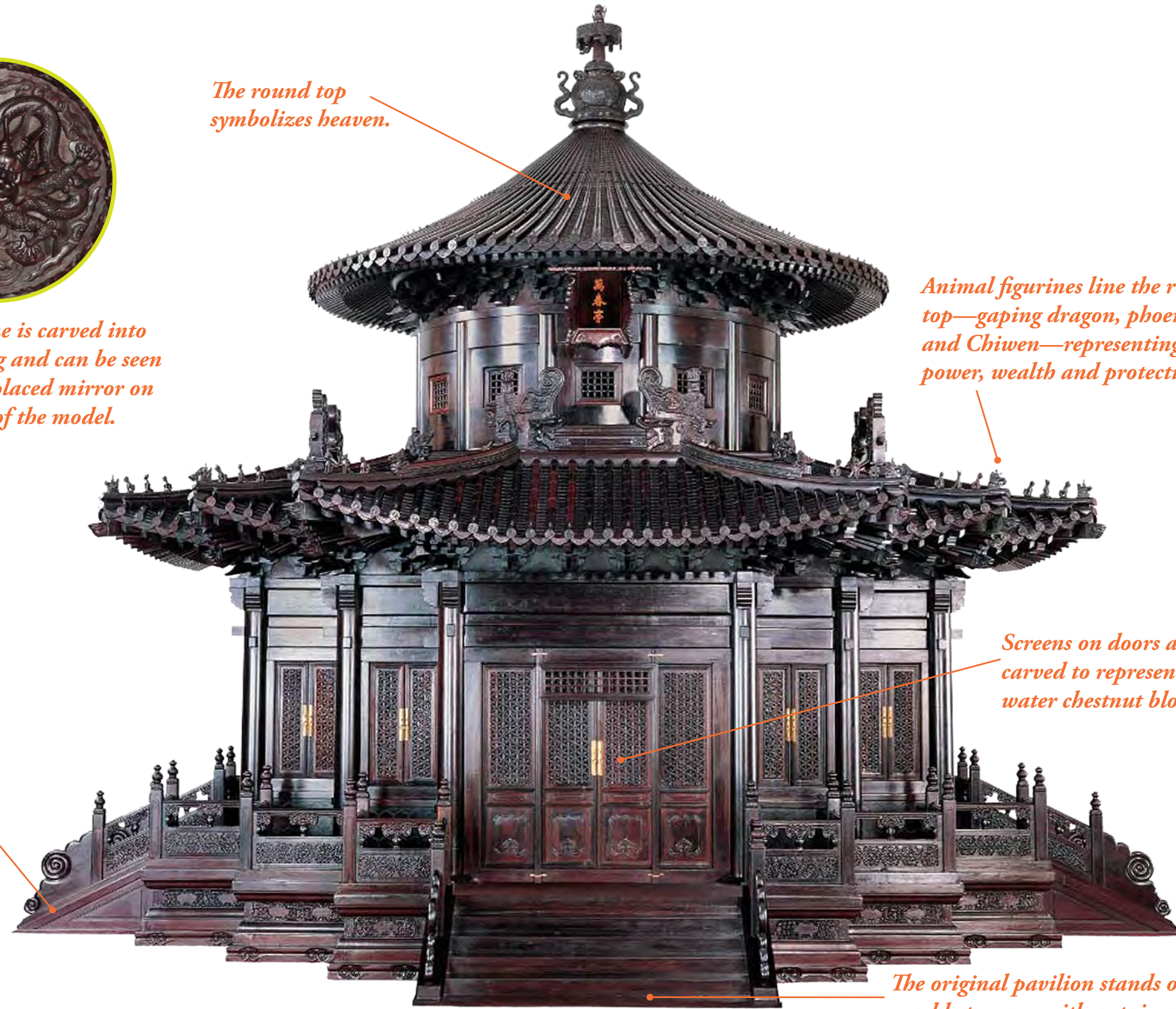
### **Forbidden Fact:**

The pavilion is located on the east side of the garden and honors spring.



*The round top symbolizes heaven.*

*A dragon figurine is carved into the interior ceiling and can be seen with a carefully placed mirror on the east side of the model.*



*Animal figurines line the roof top—gaping dragon, phoenix, lion and Chiwen—representing imperial power, wealth and protection.*

*Screens on doors are carved to represent the water chestnut blossom.*

*The square base symbolizes earth.*

*The original pavilion stands on a balustrade marble terrace, with a staircase at every entrance.*

# FORBIDDEN FACTS

- Model arrived at the Arts Center in 14 large crates
- Weighs 1.5 tons
- Upon arrival, assembled from 3,000 individual pieces by eight men and women
- Hand carved by Chinese artisans from red sandalwood
- Nearly 60% of red sandalwood carvers are women
- Red sandalwood was highly prized in Imperial China and was used to create carved furniture and decorative objects. The tree—and the art of carving associated with it—nearly became extinct because of its popularity
- Techniques of carving red sandalwood date back thousands of years, and the creation of the model marks the resurgence of the traditional art form in China
- Red sandalwood is dense and brittle and requires the use of chisels, gouges, mallets, files, rasps and scrapers. The same tools are used when carving ivory or marble

## Reconstructing The Ten Thousand Springs Pavilion



*The model arrived in 14 carefully packed crates.*

STEP 1 →



*With the help of his crew, Smithsonian conservator Don Williams assembled the 3,000 piece structure using mortise-and-tenon joinery (no nails).*

STEP 2 →



*With just a few finishing touches, the model and exhibition are ready to view.*

STEP 3 →